



visual

GALLERIES ◊ OPENINGS ◊ PROFILES



Bellingham artist Ruthie V's PAPO submission won last year's "People's Choice Award"

BY AMY KEPFERLE

Painting the Town

THIS IS NOT A SIDEWALK SALE

"I LOVE this look down Holly Street where the road dips down and shows the other side of town," says artist Jennifer Schwartz as she stands on the sidewalk in front of her large easel near the intersection where the downtown hub connects with Bay Street. "I think it's one of the quintessential Bellingham views."

The YouTube video highlighting Schwartz and a handful of the dozens of artists who took part in last summer's Plein Air Paint Out makes it clear the annual event—now in its fourth year—is about a lot more than creating pretty pictures of the place we call home. It's also about making art public by bringing attention to the creators who live and work downtown. It's about making sure people know that those who add to the city's art scene are cultural contributors who help make Bellingham unique.

Studio UFO's Trish Harding, the mastermind behind the outdoor painting soiree, wants to keep it that way. She created the event because she wants to make sure artists continue to have affordable working spaces as Bellingham edges ever closer to gentrification and thought the Paint Out was a way to keep the dialogue flowing in a lot of different directions. Those who are painting in the outdoor spaces are encouraged to talk to passerby, and she's also hoping spectators ask questions, come by for a second look to see how the progress of the paintings is going and, come



SEE IT

WHAT: Plein Air Paint Out
WHEN: 10am-3pm, Aug. 22-23
WHERE: Downtown Bellingham
COST: \$35 for participating artists
INFO: 319-6115 or studioufo.net

November, check out the resulting exhibit at the Blue Horse Gallery.

"Artists are one of the reasons downtown Bellingham is so attractive," Harding says. "We don't want hand-outs; we just want building and galleries we can afford, and then we can sustain ourselves. We don't need hardwood floors. We don't need pristine walls."

Harding acknowledges the city has worked with her to make the event a success, and hopes they continue to do so. Last year they received a Small and Simple Grant to help advertise PAPO, and Mayor Dan Pike has been more than willing to sit down with local artists and listen to their concerns.

This weekend, as many as 100 artists will, rain or shine, set up their easels, canvases and painting supplies and attempt to capture their visions. Their only mandate is to be visible to the public and to paint what they see, whether it's an abstract vision of Bellingham Bay, the towering visage of the Whatcom Museum and its many turrets, a bearded guy lounging on a bench on Holly Street, the bustling universe of the Bellingham Farmers Market or a brick wall with an alder tree growing out of it, like artist Ron Pattern chose last year.

"I love to paint—and to see other artists paint—outside," Harding says. "You have to be totally in the moment, because in the next moment everything changes; the clouds, the birds. It's like a sundial, almost. You have to go with the air, the rain and the wind. You chase your painting, if you have to." ☺

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EVENTS

WED., AUG. 19

DOCENTS WANTED: Applications are now being accepted for the Whatcom Museum's new docent program, which is being developed in anticipation of the November opening of the new Lightcatcher Building. If you're interested in being an informed guide, training begins after Labor Day.

☎ 778-8938 OR MLBURNS@COB.ORG

FRI., AUG. 21

GARDEN GA-GA: Skagit Artists Together and the Museum of Northwest Art present "Garden GA-GA Skagit" from 4-9pm at Mount Vernon's Juntunen Farm & Gardens, 18091 Burkland Rd. Tickets are \$30 and include appetizers, garden tours, artists in action, live music and dancing. Proceeds benefit Seattle Children's Hospital.

☎ (360) 336-6114 OR SKAGIT.ORG

SAT., AUG. 22

ART AT THE WINERY: More than 50 local art vendors will have their wares available to peruse and purchase at "Art at the Winery" from 10am-5pm at Blaine's Dakota Creek Winery, 3575 Haynie Rd. Wine tastings, food and live music will be part of the event.

☎ 820-4752 OR DAKOTACREEKWinery.COM

MINSON TALK: Seattle glass artist James Minson will be available to talk about his work and his current exhibit from 12-4pm at La Conner's Museum of Northwest Art, 121 S. First St.

☎ (360) 466-4446 OR MUSEUMOFNWART.ORG

ONGOING EXHIBITS

ALLIED ARTS: "Perspectives & Presentation, Chapter 1: Landscapes," part of the 2009 Juried Artist Series, can be seen until Aug. 28 at Allied Arts, 1418 Cornwall Ave.

☎ 676-8548 OR ALLIEDARTS.ORG

ARTWOOD: "Something Fishy" and Doug Hudson's "Fall Run" will be shown through August at Artwood, 1000 Harris Ave.

☎ 647-1628

BELLINGHAM RAILWAY MUSEUM: The museum is open to the public from noon-5pm Tues. and Thurs.-Sat. at 1320 Commercial St.

☎ 393-7540

BIG FAT FISH: "Natural Splendor," featuring artists from Bellingham to Long Beach, shows through October at the Big Fat Fish Co., 1304 12th St.

☎ 733-2284

BLUE HORSE: An eclectic collection of current works by local artists Mira Kamada, Steve Satushek, Joy Olney, Shirley Erickson, and others can be seen through Aug. 28 at the Blue Horse Gallery, 301 W. Holly St.

☎ 671-2305 OR BLUEHORSEGALLERY.COM

GALLERY CYGNUS: Works by potter Alan Moe and painter Michael Clough can be viewed until Sept. 27 at La Connor's Gallery Cygnus (formerly Gallery 109), 109 Commercial St.

☎ (206) 723-9362

GOOD EARTH: Patricia Morse's hand- and coil-built stoneware and porcelain will be featured through August at Good Earth Pottery, 1000 Harris Ave.

☎ GOODEARTHPOTS.COM